

South Jordan Middle School 10245 South 2700 West South Jordan, Utah 84095

February 15-16, 2006



Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

South Jordan Middle School

10245 South 2700 West South Jordan, Utah 84095

February 15-16, 2006

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, February 15-16, 2006, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of South Jordan Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Diana Kline is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at South Jordan Middle School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at South Jordan Middle School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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•	Supervisor, School Lunch

SOUTH JORDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

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Shawn McLeod	±
Kevin Thomas	1
	1

Counseling

Holly Evans	Counselor
Kelly Graham	Counselor

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Barbara Thorkildsen
Carissa Tieken
Katrina Tuckfield
Chris Voorhees
Carol Warner
Sandra Watts
Julie Webb
Paulette Yates

SOUTH JORDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The South Jordan Middle School community is committed to improving student learning by creating a safe and respectful environment, providing a challenging curriculum, addressing the diversity of middle school learners, and fostering individual responsibility.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- 1. All students can learn.
- 2. Everyone within the school community should be valued, respected, and challenged to meet his personal best in a safe and positive environment.
- 3. The diversity of middle school students requires a wide range of teaching and assessment methods.
- 4. Responsibility for student achievement is shared by students, parents, staff, and the community.
- 5. The curriculum should meet the needs of students, adhere to district and state standards, and prepare students for the future.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ben Lems, Olympus Junior High School, Granite School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Jane Adams, Mount Logan Middle School, Logan School District
Linda James, Scott M. Matheson Junior High School, Granite School District
Willa Jamieson, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District
Mary Anne Stevens, Hunter Junior High School, Granite School District
Velden Wardle, Sandridge Junior High School, Weber School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

SOUTH JORDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

South Jordan Middle School opened in 1989. The school was built to replace an aging Bingham Middle School and is located in the western part of the city of South Jordan, Utah. The students are mostly from middle- to upper-income families. The student population is primarily Caucasian, with a minority population of less than 7 percent. Administrative change has been a challenge. South Jordan Middle School has seen 15 different administrators in its 16-year history, including five principals in the last six years. South Jordan Middle School has a licensed staff of 62 teachers, administrators and support personnel. The average stay for teachers at South Jordan Middle School is 8.6 years, and teachers have an average of 14 years' teaching experience. Thirty-two teachers have advanced degrees and nine have ESL endorsements.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

South Jordan Middle School is to be commended for its example of collaboration. All stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, support staff, students, and parents, had input in the self-study process. The Visiting Team found evidence that all stakeholders felt that their ideas and opinions were heard and considered in all decisions.

Although the overall student population of South Jordan Middle School has remained stable over the past several years, the minority population has increased from 3.75 percent in 2002 to 8.86 percent in 2005. The number of LEP students has also increased significantly from 9 students (.64 percent) in 2002 to 24 students (1.69 percent) in 2006. This increase in minority and LEP students is expected to continue over the next few years.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The staff recognizes the need to systematically collect and analyze data in order to guide decisions made by the school. The data needs to be disaggregated into a user-friendly format that is relevant and available to the staff in a timely manner. The effort should extend to national and state-administered tests, as well as district, school, and classroom-generated test data.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Test data should be disaggregated by content, student group, gender, grade level, and ethnicity. Staff members are encouraged to use this information to integrate information about individual student data into their practice.
- The Visiting Team recognizes the effort that has gone into developing an action plan in which all stakeholders had input. More definition and specificity in the action plan would help make progress toward the school's goals more measurable.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The Visiting Team found, through the self-study and interviews with staff, parents, and students, that all stake holders were invited to participate in the self-study process. Departmental and focus group analysis included input from members of the staff, parents, and students. The School Community Council and PTSA were also given opportunities for input and were kept apprised of the self-study process and the progress being made. Both parents and students indicated that their voices were heard as assessments, decisions, and recommendations pertaining to the self-study were made.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The staff did an excellent job of assessing the school through the department analyses and through the focus groups' evaluations of school-wide effectiveness. The work done reflects a significant effort to identify areas of strength and limitations. Recommendations made by each group show a desire to work toward increasing student achievement.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

South Jordan Middle School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Lifelong learners

• Students commit to creating quality work and strive for excellence.

- Students reflect on their own learning and establish goals for improvement.
- Students plan goals and timelines and identify processes and resources needed for a specific learning task.

2. Effective Communicators

- Students use a variety of reading strategies for different reading purposes.
- Students write with clarity and purpose using the six traits model.
- Students present ideas effectively through oral presentation.
- Students recognize and evaluate various forms of communication.

3. Critical Thinkers

- Students gather and use prior information to apply to new situations.
- Students identify, evaluate, and apply multiple strategies to solve problems.
- Students organize information and justify conclusions appropriate to the context.

4. Team Players

- Students work with others to obtain common goals.
- Students evaluate and monitor individual behavior as group members.
- Students demonstrate skills in consensus building.
- Students, understand, appreciate, and respect the diversity of all.

5. Responsible Citizens

- Students articulate and apply positive character traits.
- Students assume accountability for their actions.
- Students appreciate their individuality and potential.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for community, state, nation, and worldwide issues.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

South Jordan Middle School engaged in a highly collaborative process to build a shared vision for the entire school community. All stakeholders were taken into consideration when determining the mission and beliefs of the school. The process included staff and administration in the original creation of the mission statement. Later, other stakeholders in the school community were included in the refinement of that shared vision. The resulting mission statement, beliefs, and goals are well recognized by the various members of the school community, and ownership of them is readily accepted. The Visiting Team commends South Jordan Middle School for its effort in this endeavor.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The belief statements of South Jordan Middle School are well defined and meet the needs of the students for their achievement and success. The beliefs and mission statement clearly show that the staff and administration are highly committed to the success of the students, both academically and socially. Both the mission statement and the beliefs are easily understood, readily visible, accessible to all, and student friendly. The Visiting Team was impressed with the high level of caring and dedication exhibited by the entire staff, administration, and community at large.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

There is close alignment among the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs (desired results for student learning). Students know the DRSLs and understand their importance, both in their education and in their lives outside of the classroom. The staff members have become highly motivated to incorporate the DRSLs into their lesson plans and to assist the students in increasing their awareness of the connections between what they are learning in each subject and the school-wide DRSLs. The Visiting Team recognizes that the success of these DRSLs is sometimes difficult to measure, and encourages the staff members not only to look for ways in which the DRSLs can be incorporated into daily classwork, but also to look for ways to measure the success of student learning within the framework of the DRSLs.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

Individual departments are working together to ensure that the curriculum is based on the State Core. Teachers are knowledgeable concerning the Utah State Core Curriculum standards and objectives and are diligent and thoughtful in meeting those standards. Teachers align the State Core with the DRSLs to provide students with essential knowledge and skills.

Departments hold regular meetings to coordinate curricula. However, there is some evidence that within departments there is fragmented collaboration (i.e., not all teachers teaching the same subject work together to maintain continuity in that subject). Departmental collaboration for the Results Cycle program has been effective in identifying a critical need in a department and addressing that need.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school formalize collaboration within departments.

Interdisciplinary teams were implemented this school year in the 7th, 8th and 9th grades. The 8th grade team of English, science and social studies was the only team that was scheduled with common students, and has been very successful. The other teams were less successful because the classes did not have common students. In addition to these interdisciplinary teams, there are individual teachers within the school who collaborate on cross-curricular units and projects. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue with the teaming effort and expand the cross-curricular teams to meet the needs of all students. The media center has many materials available to support cross-curricular units and can be a valuable resource.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

The staff members at South Jordan Middle School use the DRSLs to drive their curricula. Teachers have done an excellent job of working together to integrate the DRSLs into classroom instruction. Teachers make sure students understand how the DRSLs relate to the lessons presented. In this way, students recognize what the DRSLs are and how they apply to their lives.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

There is clear evidence—within individual classes and departments, and in some cases between departments—that the faculty designs and implements a variety of learning experiences. The Visiting Team observed teachers using cooperative learning strategies, direct instruction, role-playing, experimentation, class discussion, and student presentations along with other strategies, as well as using a variety of technology and multimedia for quality instructional purposes. Additionally, the school is piloting a middle school model of interdisciplinary teaming by grouping an English, history, and science class together. While visiting classes, it was obvious that teachers were aware of student needs and strove to design instruction around those needs. Teachers also include the school DRSLs in their students' learning process.

While teachers frequently and effectively use a variety of learning experiences on an informal and individual basis, the Visiting Team recommends formalizing a process for sharing these strategies within departments and school-wide.

Formalizing the process will create a forum for teachers to share successes and seek suggestions on a more "global" level within the school.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

The Visiting Team observed teachers using a variety of instructional methods in classrooms, as well as using multiple strategies within the class period. Varying strategies two or three times during the class period is especially important for middle school students.

One of the strengths of the school is the relationship and level of cooperation the Resource Department has with most departments throughout the school. Such a high level of cooperation enhances the learning of all students. Team teaching of classes, accommodating individual students, tailoring tests and assignments for individuals, pairing younger students with "mentor" students, and inclusion within traditional classrooms all address the needs of a variety of learners. The Visiting Team recommends expanding this cooperation with the Resource Department to include all core areas of math, science, social studies, and English.

The Leveling program, staff mentoring, and the study skills class also seek to meet the needs of a group of learners who often get "left behind." The Visiting Team encourages the school to continue these programs and enhance them as appropriate. The Visiting Team recommends the school continue using specific data, such as CRT scores, AYP reports and school-generated data, to identify areas of instructional strength and weaknesses school-wide or within departments. Once the areas are identified, celebrate the strengths and create a specific plan to address the instructional weaknesses by department or as an entire school.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

The school has implemented many support programs to better help students in the learning process. These include the school's anti-bullying program, enrichment or recreational programs after school, Leveling, PROWL, and numerous recognition programs such as Honor Roll, High Five, SoJo Stars, and Royal Readers.

Students and parents both feel teachers work hard to offer extra help to students. Teachers are frequently available for students and accessible to parents through appointments, e-mail or phone contact. Additionally, teachers meet with and mentor students during their Teacher Advisory period on a daily basis. Counselors offer further support through the Leveling program, At-Risk Identification, and the use of a study skills class for struggling students. There are plans to provide professional development that will focus on additional areas of assessment and student learning, such as rubric training and the Six Traits of Writing. The Visiting Team commends the school for its work on meeting the needs of

students, and encourages it to continue to put the needs of students first and foremost

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

Expectations for student achievement have been identified school-wide and aligned with the school's DRSLs to provide essential knowledge and skills for students. It is evident from classroom observations and student interviews that teachers are helping students process the application of the DRSLs into the existing curricula. Since the DRSLs are broad in nature, the Visiting Team recommends that teachers define and develop specific, measurable outcomes for each.

Teacher Advisory is used as a vehicle for helping students set both academic and social goals. The PowerSchool program is excellent for providing concise class information, which helps students attain and/or maintain grades.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

South Jordan Middle School identifies and utilizes information from assessments to properly place students, set individual goals, and offer remediation. The Quality Assessment Systems focus group reports that 88 percent of teachers use assessments that match the State Core. The Visiting Team recommends that each department review its assessment methods to ensure that they match the State Core.

Six Traits of Writing training and implementation has been ongoing school-wide for the past three years. Language arts teachers serve as "Six Traits" mentors for teachers in other departments. Also, Language arts teachers use Six Traits of Writing assessments in all grades to prepare students for the Direct Writing Assessment in the 9th grade. An in-service training is planned for March that will focus on rubrics to assess a student's writing skills based on the Six Traits of Writing.

The Accelerated Reader Program includes quarterly testing with STAR, a grade level reading assessment. Accelerated Reader is part of the language arts curriculum for all students. In addition, Accelerated Reader is also a requirement of the reading class for all 7th grade students and for those 8th grade students who are required or elect to take reading. In general, students reported that this was an effective program for improving their reading ability.

Math placement tests are given each year to determine the appropriate class for each student. An English essay test is given to determine qualification for Honors English class.

All departments use "Results Cycles" to identify an instructional focus based on student need, which is then addressed in all classrooms each quarter. The Visiting Team recommends that this program continue.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

The Visiting Team is confident that the staff is committed to fair and equitable assessments of student performance. It was noted that the faculty uses a wide variety of assessments in identifying student needs. Many teachers expressed gratitude for consultation with special education to adapt assessments. Additional reading classes for students in need are based on STAR, CRTs, and teacher recommendation. An At-Risk Management Team has been established to identify at-risk students and provide a protocol for remediation.

The Visiting Team feels that there is ongoing school administrative support for increased access and use of data.

Parents praised both teachers and the administration for their diligence in providing any needed assistance in helping students excel. It is evident that student learning and success are the central concerns of this staff.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The school has established a strong and positive learning environment in which teaching and learning are actively supported. The learning climate in the school is professional and inviting in all classrooms. Classrooms and other parts of the school facility are well cared for.

There is a culture of high expectations for students and staff. The school maintains a constant and steady focus on student learning. The depth of the school's commitment to improving student learning is clearly evident. Students are recognized for their accomplishments is several ways, including Student of the Month, Student of the Day, Honor Roll, High 5 activities, Accelerated Reader awards, No Tardy Parties, and SoJo Stars. Students commented that teachers are friendly and want to do whatever is needed to help struggling students who need extra help. The Visiting Team noted that students, faculty, staff, and administration show mutual respect for each other and are treated courteously.

Teachers expressed appreciation for the support they receive from the administration.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

The school does a good job of collaborating with all stakeholders in the decision making process. Teachers, parents, and students all feel that their voices are heard by the leadership of the school as decisions are made. Student achievement data was limited to the Iowa Test (which replaced the SAT last year), CRT scores, and the Direct Writing Assessment. Data should be disaggregated so that the individual needs of students or groups of students can be addressed. Individual class data should be shared with all members of a department as well as across departments. The Visiting Team encourages the leadership team to continue to share data and base decisions on best practices, current research, disaggregated data, and input from all stakeholders.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

The school does a good job of keeping students and parents informed of student progress through the online grading and attendance programs. Teachers do a good job of assessing the progress of individual students in their classrooms. The RESULTS program has been an effective tool in formalizing the progress of student achievement. The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership team consider expanding the RESULTS program to include behavior and other areas where such data may be useful.

There is currently no assessment system in place that links the curriculum to the DRSLs. It is noted that the school has included the development of rubrics for the DRSLs as part of its action plan. The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership team develop a comprehensive assessment system that includes the assessment of the DRSLs.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The school's staff, parents, and students strongly commended the leadership team for the creation of a safe and positive learning environment. During interviews they repeatedly commended the school's leadership team for improving the school's climate and culture, and for bringing a sense of focus to the school's goals and improvement plan. School-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to support

student learning. The school has created and sustained a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging.

The Visiting Team noted that the building and grounds are well maintained and respected by the students. Classrooms are adequately cared for and effectively used. With new computers in the media center, the Visiting Team recommends that efforts be made to look for ways in which the technology in the media center can be better utilized.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

Scarce resources are put to good use. Teachers and administrators jointly make decisions on materials, textbooks, and other supplies for the school. A conscientious effort is made to align resources with the school's goals and improvement efforts.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The leadership team supports and sustains change within the school and faculty. The Visiting Team recognized the positive and productive relationships that exist among teachers, students, support staff, administration, and parents. The school leadership encourages participation and collaboration among all stakeholders. Teachers, students, and parents all commented that they felt included in the decision making process and that their input was appreciated. The leadership team is encouraged to continue building positive relationships with all groups.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team saw evidence of community building fostered by South Jordan Middle School's students, staff, administration and parents. Each of these groups commented on the positive and productive working environment, the positive relationships, and feelings of safety, well-being and trust. The Visiting Team found that people like being at South Jordan Middle School and are proud of teacher, staff and administrative dedication, student achievement, and parental involvement.

Students at South Jordan Middle School are recognized in a number of ways through school-initiated recognition programs. A caring, positive climate is

fostered through student participation in other opportunities such as peer tutoring, school assemblies, a bully-proofing program, and mentoring for students at risk.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

South Jordan Middle School has implemented a number of activities and programs that engage the parents and families as partners in the learning process. These collaborative efforts are evidenced by the use of PowerSchool, e-mail, the PTSA newsletter, parent-teacher conferences, Community Council meetings, and back-to-school night. Collegiality is evidenced through the working relationship across K-12 levels of education shown by the student teacher program, sixth grade orientation, and departmental biannual vertical teaming with the high school that receives its students.

The Visiting Team commends the administration and faculty of South Jordan Middle School for their efforts to communicate with each other, their students and students' families, and other professional educators.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

South Jordan Middle School has a culture that is supportive of school improvement and professional development. Professional development programs focus on the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill the school's goals and expectations for student improvement. Teachers also have opportunities to attend district in-services and area conferences directed toward school-wide literacy programs and middle-level implementation.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The administration of South Jordan Middle School works to develop a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. Faculty members are supported in their pursuit of improvement through professional association memberships, inservice programs, and local and national conference participation. The process of professional development and continuous improvement is an integral part of the school's culture. The faculty's commitment to continuous improvement is evidenced by the fact that 32 teachers have received master's degrees, three have received national board certification, 12 have presented at a conference or inservice, and nine have earned ESL endorsements.

The administration, faculty, PTSA and Community Council are to be commended for the work done in preparing the self-study. All stakeholders have expressed a commitment to productive change and continuous improvement in facilitating the school's DRSLs and the school improvement plan to affect students' learning. Many teachers are incorporating the DRSLs into their lessons, as well as using the DRSLs to help drive the purpose and presentation of their subject matter. Continued efforts to develop measurements for student outcomes are recommended.

The Visiting Team commends the commitment of the faculty to pursuit of professional training, advanced degrees and endorsements. The Visiting Team recommends continued instruction involving school goals and aligning professional development opportunities with school goals.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Most Utah public junior high/middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, but only by the USOE – it is their choice to join NAAS or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?
 - The action plan addresses the major concerns identified in the self-study and profile data. Some of the action steps listed in each action plan have been in place for two or more years. The staff should reevaluate the action plan to more specifically define each step as well as timelines, resources, and assessments in order to make the goals of the action plan more measurable.
- b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?
 - There appears to be a strong school-wide and system-wide commitment to the action plan by parents and staff. Staff members are committed to seeing that the plan is effectively implemented and monitored for student success.
- c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?

The school leadership has shown great skill in implementing school action plans and focusing the work of the school on student achievement through consensus building, providing support, and making adjustments when the feedback indicates a need for adaptation or course correction. The staff has also shown remarkable unity and determination to help students succeed despite frequent turnover in school leadership in recent years.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team recognizes that the school and leadership team made a sincere effort to do a thorough analysis of the school's strengths and limitations. The process included many opportunities for parent and student input and an extensive amount of time spent in conversation by teachers and administration regarding the impact of their work on student achievement.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration for its support of the staff and its willingness to share the leadership of the school with the stakeholders.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for the unity and support that exists among staff members and for their positive relationship with each other, students, and parents.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff and administration for their conscientious and diligent efforts in creating a safe and positive school climate conducive to teaching and learning, holding high expectations for students, and having a staff characterized by caring educators willing to do whatever is necessary to help students succeed.
- The Visiting Team commends that staff and administration for creating a positive community image through their accessibility to students and parents and their prompt and appropriate feedback to questions or concerns.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its efforts to keep students and parents informed about student progress.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for efforts being made to collaborate and work together within departments and across the curriculum to provide interdisciplinary connections for students.

• The Visiting Team commends the school's commitment to implementing middle level practices.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that state and national norm-referenced tests and CRT results be disaggregated by content, gender, grade level, ethnicity, student group, etc., to provide reliable data for making judgments regarding academic growth by individual students or groups of students.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff and stakeholders revisit the DRSLs to identify measurable indicators as a foundation for formal assessments in order to monitor and measure student achievement.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff revisit the school's action plans to more specifically and clearly define their action steps, timeline, resources, and assessments
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its efforts to implement middle level philosophies and practices.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the administration and staff continue to seek innovative ways of increasing opportunities for professional development and time for teachers to collaborate more formally, share best practices, and implement the school's action plan.